

ADDRESS

OF THE

UNIVERSAL PEACE SOCIETY

TO ALL PERSONS, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND NATIONS.



To act upon the convictions of revealed duty is one of the first principles of life.

Moved with profound compassion for the immense sufferings and losses of war, and impressed with the conviction that it is a foe to justice and liberty, an offence to good morals and the common enemy of mankind, an association has been formed to counteract and overcome this evil, under the name of the *Universal Peace Society*.

We tell you nothing new, we arrogate to ourselves no superior wisdom, when we appeal for *Peace* as our highest duty and surest welfare,—that peace which means the total abnegation of all wars and fightings and the recognition of all the principles of immaculate and immutable love, justice and virtue as the foundation thereof.

We feel that there is a widely entertained belief in the omnipotence of this truth, but it has no definite form and practical force, because it has been suppressed in comparative silence by the overwhelming

influence of martial and passionate excitement. True, we reverently acknowledge the encouragement given by the good men and women of all time, and the Peace Societies of Great Britain and elsewhere. On this side of the Atlantic we find the American Peace Society, which claims to represent the cause, and is good as far as it goes, but does not go as far as goodness. Maintaining the right of defensive war, it can have no moral issue against the sin itself, for all wars are easily construed to be defensive. Therefore, while we hold that human life and natural rights are inviolable and inalienable, because all human beings are the offspring of one all-perfect and beneficent Father; objects of his impartial love; having a common welfare, and endowed with the same essential spirit; loving the same joys and suffering the same pains; bound by the supreme law to love their Heavenly Father with all fervency, and each other as themselves, and convinced that war and the spirit of deadly force subverts these cardinal principles and causes that "disloyalty to humanity which is treason against God," and that infidelity to principle which is crucifixion of Christ, this Society is founded to supply an imperative need and to carry forward a good work, and may its thorough and universal invocations be appreciated in the sincerity with which they are offered.

True love to man allows no intentional injury to any one, but imperatively insists that the highest good of each and all shall be sacredly regarded, and all resorts to deadly force between man and man are transgressions of the divine law and to be deprecated accordingly. In proportion as the law of love is rev-

erenced and obeyed it tends to the diminution of human outrage and the promotion and security of life, rights and happiness.

We, therefore, consecrate our cause with this love, which aboundeth with peace, and while we shall make no concessions with wrong and no compromises with any war that will impair our faith in pure peace principles, we shall not forget that charity which accepts honest convictions and welcomes the co-operation of every one animated by sincere religious feelings and faithful integrity. The universality of our demand is commensurate with our disregard of every distinction of theological or political creed, every geographical or geneological condition, covering any discrimination of nation, rank, age, sex, race or color.

We are aware that this movement is against the tide of a widely prevalent martial feeling, and scarcely expect candid and impartial consideration; for it is the nature of war to pardon all sins deemed essential to the accomplishment of its aims and purposes.

But, friends, whoever you are and whatever your position, we ask a hearing. If opposed to us and our principles we come not to make a war of blood and of hate upon you. If you, through conviction dissent we shall regret it, though we shall not despond. We are for principles, not for persons; for that which is immortal, not for that which is mortal. If you meet and co-operate with us, you will strengthen us. If you meet and do not unite with us, you may give us your objections and thus elicit truth. If you neither meet nor unite with us, we trust you will not

weaken the cause, but suggest something better for the promotion of peace. We shall thus establish one of its conditions. These conditions are too numerous for enumeration here. As an anchor of our faith we feel Peace to be self control. When we seek to control others we touch the most sensitive and delicate nerve of creation. But if it shall be through the tenderest touches of love, kindness and charity, we shall excite a kindred pulsation and win over the antagonistic and rebellious.

Strong in truth and firm in that faith which is mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, we shall cheerfully bide our time, remitting no effort as light and strength shall be given us, to go on and agitate and appeal, until the public mind shall heed the enormity of that hypocrisy, which in the annals of Christian profession, "none but itself can be its parallel."

There is a confirmed abhorrence of fraud, theft, tyranny and murder when committed in a private capacity; then why should there not be a similar revulsion from those crimes when committed in a wholesale and flagrant manner, under the sanction of human law upon the battle field?

As man cannot dethrone God, no human legislation or national custom can make virtuous that which He proclaims wicked, or absolve individuals from moral obligations. We appeal, then, to the so-called Christian world, that has been devout in professions of that Christ we all acknowledge, and for the honor of religion deny that Christianity sanctions war under any circumstances whatever.

To any others we appeal to the light of the purest spirit which you recognize; to experience and the finest feelings of your nature. We feel all will unite in the same language in deprecating war as an impious offence, opposed to the best interests of humanity, full of horrors, oppression and deceit; a delusion that misleads the minister, dethrones Christianity and blinds the masses; and is a withering reproach to our manhood. Our God or your God, if the embodiment of the highest virtues, cannot be a God of battles. Among the first commands of the old Mosaic law was: "Thou shalt not kill," and the new dispensation opened with the injunction: "Peace on earth and good will among men." And yet the record of the past is written in blood. The experiment of 6000 years has failed. Is it not time to try some other and better method?

The number of lives sacrificed on the altar of war runs into billions, and the expense incurred is simply incalculable. No research shall ever be able to estimate the loss and cost.

We would not burden our message with unnecessary statistics, or quote any nation in any ungenerous or specially censorious spirit, but feel to recall the period from 1141 to 1815, an interval of 674 years, when England was at war with France 266 years, and her wars with other countries cover a period of at least half that time. Since the peace at Amiens more than 4,000,000 of human beings were sacrificed under the power of Napoleon Bonaparte, and during Queen Anne's reign \$66,000,000 were expended for war, and without gaining the object most

to be desired ; which, indeed, is the ordinary result of all wars ; and treaties, under such circumstances, become but compromising leases and temporary amnesties, for they never establish peace permanently. War can do no more. While armies and navies are preserved, it is never ended. A cessation of hostilities is a recuperation for the death-struggle. The jewel of Peace must be set in different metal—the very antipodes of anger, strife and bloodshed. The return of good for evil ensures the effectual victory over oppression and aggression, far better than the most potent martial defence.

The wars of our own time, especially those in this country and in Europe, ought to so shock our professions and intelligence that we should declare at once, now and forever, for a plan for the prevention and adjustment of difficulties strictly in conformity with reason and a Christ-like spirit. In our late struggle nearly a million of lives were sacrificed, and about \$3,000,000,000 expended, and yet to-day the time and talents of a Congress and a nation are summoned for a settlement.

We make no apology for our national transgression in this particular. As Americans our political sympathies for freedom, right and pure republicanism, may be easily interpreted. We have stood aloof from the battle, from no contemptible partisan motives, but because our first allegiance was to God, and he withheld our hands. Our humanity and patriotism know no limits ; we feel all to be within the fold of the great brotherhood of man. Friends, of the continent of Europe, we have a fraternal solicitude for you.

We can weep together over the fearful drain of blood and treasure and the blight of prosperity and happiness. If we rejoice at all, it is that beneath the sword power there is a deep current of moral worth and above it Providence ruleth supreme. At the threatening condition of your national affairs, we are deeply pained. Provocations may appear beyond endurance; circumstances may seem to involve you irresistibly in a conflict of arms; and contingencies may arise that seem insurmountable, but we feel it our duty and our right to appeal to you not to further profane the page of history. Can you not trust the right? God will not forsake the righteous! Nations are but the aggregate of individuals. Stand firmly by virtue and the weakest shall be saved! Do not repeat the worst phases of degenerate human nature! Let us unite to give a higher tone to the Nineteenth century! You may battle on for years, destroying noble lives, spending immense treasures and profaning God, and like us you will revert again to the settlement of the vexed questions by courts and assemblies.

There is a want of wisdom in surrendering reason to brute force in any extremity. If we are really blessed with reason above the brute, it must be good and efficient for all emergencies.

Let there be national and international Councils, wherein all states and nations may be equally represented, for the settlement of difficulties by arbitration; each resolved to abide by the decision of the majority.

We appeal none the less urgently to our own countrymen. We are verily guilty among the guiltiest.

The very first inalienable right which our Declaration of Independence consecrates, our Constitution, with its own clauses, desecrates. Until there shall be a change in this respect, civilization has culminated, far as it is from a realization of our hopes.

With so much greatness of thought, freedom, liberality and profession why should we put our trust in arms? No country can better inaugurate this movement than the United States.

May Peace glow in every breast, enter every home, and animate every community! Millions will rejoice and offer benedictions!

In the fullest conviction that we are right, with unfaltering faith and humble reliance upon Truth, we invoke the aid of every friend of humanity and the attention of every human government, that "all our ways may be ways of pleasantness and all our paths be peace."

Communications and contributions may be sent to Lysander S. Richards, Corresponding Secretary, 67 Purchase Street, Boston, Mass.

The following was adopted at the Convention held in Providence, R. I., May 16, 1866:

PREAMBLE.

Whereas life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are natural, inalienable rights, subject to no human governments, but superior to all; and whereas whatever is abstractly wrong can never be practically right or be innocently encouraged, neither can persons perform collectively what is unlawful for individuals, nor serve self and country to the injury of mankind, and

whereas Peace is self-control, and the abnegation of carnal weapons and the recognition of all the principles of love, justice, charity and purity make for peace, communities and States permanently unite by attraction and consent, never through coercive violence, and the sword is not an essential element of our social system, but like duelling and slavery, a relic of barbarous times and owes its prevalence to popular delusion; and whereas wise advocates of truth, believing in God, believe also in man, overcome evil with good, choose to die rather than kill; and whereas war destroys life, invades liberty, subverts good morals and the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ, retards and defeats, rather than insures progress and the common welfare, and is a standing reproach to human nature, therefore we, the undersigned, in order to avail ourselves of the advantages of associate effort, unite in forming a society to promote these truths, and adopt for our guidance the following

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I. This Association shall be known as the Universal Peace Society.

ART. II. Its objects shall be to remove the causes and abolish the customs of war. To discountenance all resorts to deadly force between individuals, states or nations, never acquiescing in present wrongs. By taking away the sword, give potency to the tongue and pen, and encourage moral efforts for the removal of these wrongs and evils, compromise with which renders peace impossible and undesirable. It will

employ popular conventions, lectures, tracts, petitions, the pulpit, the press, and a Congress of nations. It will abstain from all political complications with governments of force, and use all effectual means of reason and moral appeal to convince the people that war is a sin against God and opposed to the best interests of mankind, and its immediate abandonment is alike a religious duty, the wisest expediency and an imperative necessity.

ART. III. All persons, irrespective of sex, race, condition or nationality, who subscribe to its principles and contribute to its funds shall be regarded as members of this association and entitled to a voice and vote in its meetings. And that no one shall be compromised by any vote of the majority. Such minority may be recorded whenever requested.

ART. IV. Its officers shall be elected annually and consist of a President, Vice-Presidents, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, and Auditor, who shall perform the customary duties of their respective offices; and of an Executive Committee of not less than five or over twelve members.

ART. V. The Executive Committee shall have power to enact their own by-laws, fill any vacancy in their body, or in the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, employ agents and publishers, direct the Treasurer in the applications of all moneys, and call special meetings of the Society. They shall arrange for general conventions of the Society and make an annual report of their doings, of the expenditures and funds of the So-

ciety, and adopt the most energetic measures in their power to advance its objects.

ART. VI. The annual meeting of the Society shall be held at such time and place as the Executive Committee may direct, when the account of the Treasurer shall be presented, the annual report read, appropriate addresses delivered, and such other business transacted as may be deemed expedient.

ART. VII. All Associations having the same principles and purposes, may become auxiliary to this Society, and their members shall be entitled to equitable representation in its meetings. The public conventions of this Society shall allow freedom of criticism and dissent, and respect diversities of opinion as tending to the development and establishing of truth.

ART. VIII. This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Society by a vote of two-thirds of the members present, provided the changes have been previously submitted to the Society in regular session or to the Executive Committee.

The next meeting of the Convention will be held in Philadelphia, Oct. 10, 1866.

ALFRED H. LOVE,

Philadelphia.

LYSANDER S. RICHARDS, Boston, }
MISS LAURA BLIVIN, Providence. } *Sec'ys.*

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